

# TORIES OUT—GENERAL ELECTION NOW!

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# Socialist Worker

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## RATTLED TORIES LAUNCH RACIST SCARE CAMPAIGN



A SMALL number of refugees have attempted to cross the Channel

# OPEN THE BORDERS

by TOMÁŠ TENGELY-EVANS

**THE TORIES** have manufactured a racist scare over a tiny number of refugees trying to make it across the English Channel.

Home secretary Sajid Javid this week deployed a further two UK Border Force patrol boats to keep refugees trapped at Britain's border in Calais.

And to increase the sense of

crisis, defence secretary Gavin Williamson said the British armed forces "stand ready" to step in if the number of refugee crossings goes up.

The UK Border Force intercepted a boat with

12 refugees—including one ten year old child—on Monday.

It had detained at least 94 refugees since 25 December as Socialist Worker went

>>>continued on Page 4

### HISTORY

1919—the year that Britain was in revolt

ONE HUNDRED years ago protests and strikes shook the state.

The year 1919 saw 34 million strike days, rioting police, an armed forces' mutiny and mass resistance among the working class.

Thousands of soldiers mutinied—and workers struck and demonstrated.

>>>Pages 10&11

### BREXIT



## Mainstream politics is paralysed

THERESA May's government hangs by a thread. But she won't go unless she is pushed.

And the trade unions and Labour Party are watching events rather than trying to shape them.

May is in a deep political crisis—yet Labour is also paralysed.

>>>Page 3

### UNITED STATES

## Attack on migrants leaves workers unpaid

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump is so determined to push through his racist assault on migrants that he is prepared to stop government workers' pay.

Hundreds of thousands of workers have gone without pay since 22 December.

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## THE THINGS THEY SAY

### 'A glass of wine and some crisps'

The Daily Mail on how Theresa May celebrated winning a confidence vote

### 'Fuelling blue on blue'

Tory Tobias Ellwood says Jacob Rees-Mogg is encouraging the Tory civil war

### 'She's not the leader to rebuild the Tories' reputation'

The Sun on Theresa May

### 'How about those boobs? Wouldn't you want to f\*\*k her?'

What Donald Trump said about some women while hosting The Apprentice show

### 'Rather closed mind'

Margaret Thatcher on Nelson Mandela in 1990

### 'The trains are a mess'

An editorial in The Sun

### 'It's no surprise Corbyn's most popular policy is renationalising'

The Sun continues

### 'He will go to prison or become a millionaire'

School report prediction for Richard Branson



# One fifth of big companies paid no tax on their profits

**ONE IN five of Britain's biggest listed companies paid not a penny of tax on their profits last year.**

Details of the tax paid by 69 of the 100 largest companies on the stock market has emerged. The remaining 31 refused to disclose their tax payments.

Some 13 firms either paid no corporation tax in Britain or even got a tax credit from the government.

The list includes BP, Royal Mail and British Gas owner Centrica.

Usually firms pay corporation tax of 19 percent of their total profits.

BP made £5.6 billion in profit last year—yet still received tax credits worth £134 million.

That meant it paid no tax on its profits.

Royal Mail boss Rico Back

stands to earn £1.8 million this year on top of a glittering £5.8 million "golden hello" for joining the company.

Royal Mail made around £39 million profit here last year and £212 million globally. Yet it got a tax credit of £93 million.

Centrica's annual report says it "received a cash refund of tax overpaid in periods prior to 2015".

Randgold Resources, which mines gold in Africa, is based in the Channel Islands and pays no tax in Britain. Chief executive Mark Bristow received over £7 million last year.

Land speculators British Land and Segro, paid no tax last year. Liverpool Football Club shirt sponsors Standard Chartered bank, which made £1.8 billion profit last year, got a £12 million tax credit.



	Revenue	Profit	Tax
Antofagasta	£3.75bn	£1.45bn	Nil
AstraZeneca	£17.75bn	£1.76bn	Nil
BP	£193bn	£6bn	-£134m
British Land	£639m	£501m	-£6m
Centrica	£28bn	£142m	-£88m
Evraz	£8.55bn	£912m	Nil
Fresnillo	£1.65bn	£588m	Nil
NMC Health	£1.27bn	£166m	Nil
Ocado	£1.46bn	£1m	Nil
Randgold Resources	£1bn	£380m	Nil
Royal Mail	£10.2bn	£212m	-£93m
Segro	£335m	£976m	Nil
Standard Chartered	£11.4bn	£1.91bn	-£12m

**BINYAMIN Netanyahu's son** was temporarily banned from Facebook last month.

Yair Netanyahu had made a series of anti-Muslim and anti-Palestinian posts. One said that he would prefer all Muslims to leave Israel.

He previously posted material which many Jewish groups described as antisemitic.



Yair Netanyahu

**TWO TORY MPs** suspended over "serious allegations" of sexual misconduct had their suspensions lifted so they could take part in the confidence vote on Theresa May's leadership of the Tories.

The reinstatement of Charlie Elphicke and Andrew Griffiths caused fury. May survived the vote although 117 voted against her.

## MPs 'misled' about the real cost of HS2

PARLIAMENT was misled about the cost of the HS2 high-speed rail project, whistleblower Doug Thornton told the BBC's Panorama programme last month.

The former senior staff member said that MPs' decision to approve HS2 was based on cost estimates that were hundreds of millions of pounds too low.

Thornton said HS2 managers ignored warnings about the wrong estimates. HS2 denied it misled parliament.

Thames Water was fined £2 million last month for a "reckless failure" that



HS2 is costly

saw a tributary of the Thames river polluted with raw sewage.

Untreated sewage flowed into a brook near Milton-under-Wychwood in the Cotswolds in August 2015. A court heard that Thames Water ignored over 1,000 alarms from the Bruern Road sewage pumping station in west Oxfordshire in the six weeks leading up to the incident.

## More British arms sales to dictators

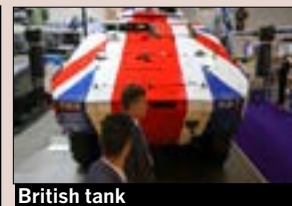
NEARLY A third of arms exports authorised by Britain over the past decade went to countries with the worst records on human rights.

The Action on Armed Violence group looked at arms deals worth an estimated £39 billion between 2008 and 2017.

Some £12 billion went to states on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office human rights "priority countries" list.

There are 30 countries on the list of states with poor human rights records.

The only one that Britain did not approve



British tank

arms export deals to over the period was North Korea.

The number of arms export licences to nations on the watchlist in 2017 is almost double the figure of the previous year.

Britain provided Saudi Arabia with military exports worth £10.3 billion over the past decade.

## Black workers are losing over £3 billion a year

BLACK, ASIAN and ethnic minority workers are losing £3.2 billion a year in wages compared with white workers doing the same work.

The research by the Resolution Foundation looked at pay for Britain's 1.9 million black and minority ethnic workers.

It found that the pay gap rose to as much as 17 percent or £3.90 an hour for some workers.

A previous audit of public sector pay in London showed that black and minority ethnic workers are paid up to 37 percent less on average than white workers.



## £226MN

the amount of money 124 hospital trusts in England made in 2017-18 from car parking charges and fines

## 40%

more than 40 percent of the trusts had increased their charges in that year

## Bosses pay young illegally low wages

ONE IN five young workers are being illegally paid less than the national minimum wage, according to a charity.

The Young Women's Trust said that the figure for young black people is one in four.

It surveyed over 4,000 people aged between 18 and 30. Those in London were most likely to report being underpaid.

**WAGES IN** parts of Britain are still worth a third less than they were a decade ago, according to the TUC.

The average worker has lost £11,800 in real earnings since 2008.

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# Tories face Brexit crisis—but Labour is paralysed

**THERESA MAY'S government hangs by a thread. But she won't go unless she is pushed—and the trade unions and Labour Party are watching events rather than trying to shape them.**

The debate on May's Brexit deal resumes next Monday, with a vote scheduled for mid-January.

There seems scant chance of it passing through parliament—despite May handing out bribes such as the knighthood for the previously anti-deal John Redwood.

And the European Union (EU) leaders are offering no hope of changing fundamentally what's on offer.

May's strategy is to say the only alternative to her deal is a no deal exit that would have serious economic dangers.

But the Tories' measures to prepare for such an outcome are causing new scandals.

Hapless transport secretary Chris Grayling is under pressure to explain awarding a £14 million contract for shipping goods after Brexit to a new ferry company—that doesn't have any ships.

Nor has Seaborne Freight ever operated a ferry route.

May survived a vote of no confidence among Tory MPs before Christmas. But over a third of Tory MPs voted against, and she had to promise that she would not lead the party into the next election.

## Competition

That has unleashed open competition for her job among Tory MPs.

Britain's rulers are in a deep political crisis. Yet Labour is also stricken.

In mid-December Jeremy Corbyn first said Labour would move a no confidence vote in May but not the government.

Then he decided not to move it—and then did move it after all.

But, fearful of losing, the Tories said they would deny it time for a

**THERESA MAY is fighting to control Tories who oppose her Brexit deal**

## BACK STORY

**The Tory crisis over Brexit continued over the holidays**

● Over a third of Tory MPs voted against Theresa May in a confidence vote last month

● Tories are split over whether to back May's Brexit deal and there's a chance to get them out

● But unfortunately the Labour Party and union leaders aren't piling the pressure onto them

● We need to fight for an anti-racist, anti-austerity Brexit that benefits working class people

debate. This is a disgusting denial of democracy.

But the Tories couldn't do this if Labour moved a motion of no confidence in the government.

That has to be discussed within 24 hours and, if passed, would almost certainly force a general election.

One argument is that Labour must only move the no confidence motion when it is certain it can win.

Waiting until elements of the loathsome Tory right are certain to move against May or until the DUP has abandoned her is not good enough.

There's a great danger of allowing the Tories to survive for years more.

Above all the argument has to be

wrenched away from parliamentary manoeuvre and taken to the streets and the workplaces.

The demonstration next Saturday is a chance to do that.

A movement on anything like the scale of France's Yellow Vests could sweep away the government.

It's time to stop spectating, stop the talk of a second referendum and to fight for an anti-racist, anti-austerity Brexit that benefits working class people.

## What's your story?

Email with your ideas  
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

# Archives release protects state secrets

NATIONAL ARCHIVES records released last month saw most state secrets remain secret.

The National Archives withdrew thousands of files relating to Britain's nuclear weapons and atomic energy programmes from public view just days before the release date.

But other documents that were released give some insight into how the ruling class works.

Rail workers held a series of national strikes in 1994.

"The opposition's ambivalence to the dispute" was noted in cabinet minutes and seen as something the government could "continue to exploit".

The government wanted to keep

any settlement low as previously a high pay award "such as the ambulance dispute of 1989" had a knock on effect.

Irish state papers reveal that, in a secret memo, foreign secretary Geoffrey Howe had asked that a message be conveyed by Ambassador Fenn to the Irish government.

The message was to "ask that the Irish government should recognise the difference between violence used by those whose aim is to overthrow the state and violence arising in the operations of the security forces, within the law and for the public good."

For a longer version of this article, go to [bit.ly/natarchive](http://bit.ly/natarchive)

Former Tory prime minister John Major

## Claimants forced to beg online

HUNDREDS OF people have been forced to beg for money online because of the Tories' hated Universal Credit (UC) benefit.

Figures obtained by The Independent website showed a surge in crowdfunding campaigns set up by people on UC.

There are 905 GoFundMe campaigns by UC claimants appealing for donations. This is a 500 percent rise compared to the previous year.

Lorraine Robinson-Moseley from West Lothian in Scotland set up a GoFundMe campaign to help get the deposit for a new home.

"I've never thought about doing this type of thing before," she said. "But it's got to the point where I thought I can't have myself and my son homeless."

## Barrier

The Tories say UC makes work pay. But a Work and Pensions Committee report last month found that UC is a barrier to work for parents.

It found that "some 100,000 households—including the poorest—will receive less for their childcare costs than under the legacy system".

"Too many will face a stark choice—turn down a job offer, or get themselves into debt in order to pay for childcare," it said.

And Gateshead GP Mark Dornan told the Newcastle Chronicle newspaper that his surgery sees "at least one person a day where Universal Credit is playing a role in their ill health".

UC is an attack on working class people and it should be scrapped now.

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BROKEN—  
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ELECTION  
NOW**

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# Tories stoke racism with a fake crisis in Channel

The Tories have manufactured a sham migrant crisis to justify their racism, writes **Tomáš Tengely-Evans**

*Continued from front page*

to press on Tuesday. This is on top of the 65 refugees, mainly from Iran, who were detained in the last three weeks of last November.

This is nothing compared, for example, to the 3.6 million Syrian refugees in Turkey.

The Tories have deliberately used the refugee boat landings around Dover to manufacture a new round of racist scapegoating.

Charlie Elphicke, the Tory MP for Dover and Deal, claimed, “We are seeing a big increase in numbers” of Iranian migrants. And he called for “investment in stronger borders all the way along our coast”.

Andy Brown, an NEU union member from east London, was volunteering with the Care4Calais charity in northern France during the holidays. He told Socialist Worker, “The Tories are overplaying what’s happening to make out that we’re threatened by ‘hordes of migrants’ or an ‘alien threat’”.

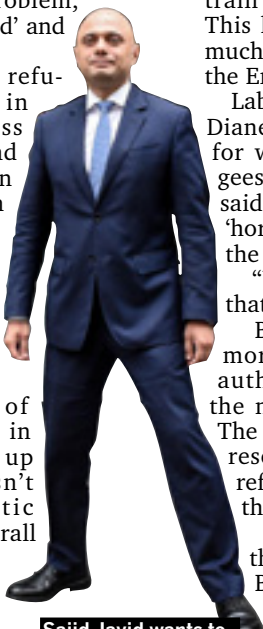
“After the Windrush scandal they are trying to rebuild the idea that migrants are a problem, that there are ‘good’ and ‘bad’ migrants.”

Around 1,500 refugees are living in destitution across Calais, Cannes and Dunkirk in northern France and in nearby Belgium.

Many are fleeing the West’s wars in the Middle East, poverty and dictatorship.

The number of Iranian refugees in Calais has gone up while there hasn’t been a dramatic increase in the overall number.

US president Donald Trump’s renewed sanctions against the country have made its



**Sajid Javid wants to keep out migrants and whip up racism**

## BACK STORY

**People are resorting to increasingly dangerous measures to try and reach Britain**

- The number of undocumented people crossing the English Channel by boat has risen
- Overall numbers remain small
- Tory home secretary Sajid Javid has seized on the increase to push his racist agenda
- The only way to fight the Tories’ racist scapegoating is to build an independent anti-racist movement

spiralling social crisis unbearable even for many middle class Iranians.

And many of the refugees from Iran are in fact Iranian-Kurds, who face oppression at the hands of the regime.

## Perilous

Repression by British and French border authorities has made attempting to cross on lorries, the train or the ferry more difficult. This has forced many to take the much more perilous journey across the English Channel.

Labour’s shadow home secretary Diane Abbott slammed the Tories for whipping up fear over refugees ahead of the Brexit vote. She said, “It’s the Farage technique—‘hordes’ of people trying to enter the country.”

“You frighten people about that.”

But Labour has only called for more cooperation with French authorities and has welcomed the new UK Border Force boats. The boats are not there to simply rescue people, but to intercept refugees in the hope of sending them back to France.

The only solution is to open the border let the refugees into Britain in safety.

And that means building a mass movement against racism that can force the Tory government to do it.



**A SMALL** number of people have made it across the English Channel by boat this winter

# New racist laws are set out in Javid’s immigration white paper

**THE TORIES** have ramped up their racist scapegoating with plans that could block the majority of European Union (EU) immigration after Brexit.

Home secretary Sajid Javid pledged the Tories would “get control over our borders” and that freedom of movement would end “deal or no deal”.

The proposals in the immigration white paper, published late last year, will make it harder for migrant workers to come to Britain.

The new racist rules would be phased in from 2021.

The proposals divide workers between “skilled” and “unskilled”.

EU migrants deemed to be “skilled” would have to apply for a five-year work visa. The proposals would be harsher for “unskilled” workers, who would only be able to apply for a temporary one-year work visa.

The one-year visa is a particularly brutal idea. Workers would be shipped in for the benefit of businesses, but denied



**Migrants are at the heart of the NHS**

the right to settle. It is a racist recipe for a section of workers to be regarded as “foreigners” to be exploited while being treated as second class.

And if EU migrants wanted to come in on a “family visa”, their British partner or parent would have to meet a minimum £18,600 income threshold.

Yet super rich “investors” would be able to get around the maximum-stay rules through specialist visa arrangements.

The white paper also leaves open the possibility of a £30,000 minimum income threshold for

EU migrants applying for jobs in Britain. Some 76 percent of EU nationals working in Britain earn less than £30,000 a year.

This includes many of the workers without whom the NHS wouldn’t run.

Even the research that the government says it used for its white paper shows that migrants don’t hit wages or jobs.

We need stronger trade unions, not stronger laws against migrants.

Anti-racists should fight to defend and extend freedom of movement.



# Cop lied to inquest into Kingsley Burrell's death

AN internal police investigation into the testimony given by three cops in relation to the death of Kingsley Burrell has proven gross misconduct charges against one officer.

The testimony concerned was given at the 2015 inquest into Kingsley's death.

Paul Adley has been dismissed after it was found he gave a false account of the events surrounding Kingsley's death. Now he should be tried in a criminal court.

The hearings were held to investigate whether officers had breached standards for the use of force or honesty and integrity.

All three were cleared of allegations concerning their use



Kingsley Burrell

of force. Kingsley died on 31 March 2011. He was restrained by police at a mental health unit and beaten severely.

He was then left unattended and unconscious for 28 minutes with a towel over his face and his trousers around his ankles.

Kingsley's sister, Kedisha Brown-Burrell, said, "It has been an arduous journey for our family. No family should have

an untimely death especially when the death is caused by the police. The conduct of these officers, the disregard of Kingsley.

"The lack of care and ultimately the lying at the inquest, criminal trial and now this misconduct hearing brings the police into disrepute.

"Losing their jobs is nothing to my one and only brother losing his life."

Deborah Coles from the Inquest campaigning organisation said, "While gross misconduct by one of these officers has been sanctioned, it is incomprehensible that the excessive use of force by all three officers was not proven."



Protesting in Swansea for Otis Bolamu

PICTURE: SWANSEA STAND UP TO RACISM

## Deportation halted after fight

THE deportation of Otis Bolamu, which had been scheduled for Christmas Day, has been halted for the time being.

It is crucial to keep up the campaign for him to stay in Britain and not be sent back to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Otis was forced to flee the DRC in Central Africa because he was part of the opposition to the authoritarian rule of Western-backed president Joseph Kabila. Otis said, "The president and government don't accept me because I joined the party of opposition."

Kabila, who succeeded his father in 2001, has repeatedly delayed presidential elections for the last two years

in an attempt to cling on to power. Otis told Socialist Worker, "I was working for the electoral commission in my country.

"The president doesn't like me because he asked me to help with voting card fraud this year.

"I refused, so he put me in prison."

The postponement of the deportation, following a determined campaign by Wales Stand Up To Racism and many others, may have saved Otis's life.

Otis, who lives in Swansea, was seized in a dawn raid on 13 December.

He spoke to Socialist Worker from his cell in Bridgend. "If the immigration authorities make me go back to the Congo, the government would arrest me and try to

kill me," he said.

He added, "I'm very fearful and not in a good place."

Otis was later moved to Brook House immigration removal centre near Gatwick airport.

But his campaign won support from a wide range of people, including Plaid Cymru assembly member Bethan Sayed who wrote, "It is vitally important we all work together to oppose this deportation."

Otis's local MP, Labour's Carolyn Harris, has given him her support and Plaid Cymru leader Adam Price also urged the Home Office to stop the deportation.

A petition has been signed by over 11,000 people.

Sign the petition at [bit.ly/OtisStays](http://bit.ly/OtisStays)

## Socialist Worker WHAT WE THINK

# TURN THE TIDE ON TORIES AND RACISTS IN 2019

**T**HESE ARE urgent times. Political and economic crises are accelerating, and racists and fascists are seeking to grow amid the chaos.

The Tories are trying to manufacture a racist crisis over a few hundred refugees trying to enter Britain.

It's a deliberate attempt to increase toxic British nationalism and to divert attention from the Brexit chaos and the class war waged on working class people.

The real crisis is not refugees. It's 14 million people in Britain living in poverty, soaring foodbank use, and more than 70,000 NHS operations cancelled in 2017-18 due to underfunding.

The Tories want a "refugee invasion" to be the news, not the 597 deaths of homeless people in England and Wales in 2017.

Ten years since the financial crisis there are strong indications that another crash is coming.

And job losses, such as the 2,200 threatened now at media retailer HMV, show what happens when profits come first and people's lives are ignored.

In his New Year message Jeremy Corbyn pledged, "We'll

stand up to the powerful few so that the wealth you create is shared fairly not hoarded by a privileged elite."

That's a welcome promise. But to make it reality needs struggle in the streets and workplaces, not waiting for an election that might not come for over three years.

We need to push for more strikes and protests.

We need to step up solidarity with every strike and every battle against Universal Credit and in defence of the NHS, education and other services.

And we also have to fight the attempts to divide us. The size and breadth of the anti-racist demonstration on 17 November

**The real crisis isn't refugees. It's 14 million people living in poverty**

## WE CAN WIN ON PALESTINE

**I**T IS possible to stand up for the right to criticise Israel—as a victory for a Palestine solidarity activist last month showed.

Paul Jonson, a Dudley council worker in the West Midlands, was suspended from his job last year after calling Israel a "racist endeavour" on Facebook.

His case was a test of how far accusations of antisemitism under the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) definition can be used to clamp down on criticism of Israel.

The Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA)—which considers anti-Zionism to be antisemitic—complained about Paul to Dudley council.

There are also questions to be asked about the role of Labour MP Ian Austin in Paul's victimisation.

The complaint came after Austin—an "honorary patron" of the CAA—recognised and confronted Paul at a lobby outside one of his surgeries.

Yet for all that, Paul was told

and when we outnumbered Ukip and fascist Tommy Robinson's forces on 9 December were steps forward.

But that needs to be developed further this year.

Socialist Worker urges its readers to build all the Stand Up To Racism events, in particular the national demonstrations on 16 March in London, Cardiff and Glasgow.

Capitalism means poverty, war, racism and climate catastrophe.

The Cop24 environment summit last month hardly even pretended to offer any serious action. The US, Russia and Saudi Arabia prevented endorsement of the completely mainstream views of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

It's time for a fightback on all these fronts. We take inspiration from the struggles by ordinary people in recent weeks.

These include the French Yellow Vests, the one million Indian bank workers who struck on 26 December, those fighting for change in Sudan, and the left opposition to Viktor Orban in Hungary.

Let's make 2019 a year of successful resistance.

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## ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



## Turkey gains from isolationist Trump

**JUST BEFORE** Christmas Donald Trump took an important step towards controlling his own administration. By announcing the withdrawal of US troops in Syria he provoked the resignation of his defence secretary Jim Mattis.

Mattis immediately became a hero to Trump's domestic opponents and the European media. This infuriated Trump, who vindictively reacted by bringing forward Mattis's departure by two months.

Mattis and outgoing White House chief of staff John Kelly were the last of the generals with whom Trump initially stuffed his cabinet to make it seem respectable. But the outrage at Mattis's departure shown by many liberal Democrats and European social democrats is puzzling.

As an article in Foreign Policy magazine pointed out, "It is often overlooked that Mattis oversaw a growth in the wars that he inherited from the Obama administration. There was a steady growth in airstrikes in declared warzones (such as Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan), as well as in non-battlefield settings (Somalia, Yemen, and Pakistan). There was also an expansion of the US military footprint in the Middle East, from 40,517 troops in mid-2017 to 54,180 by September."

Perhaps worst of all, Mattis continued Barack Obama's policy of providing in-air refuelling for Saudi warplanes carrying out their barbaric bombing campaign in Yemen. Some liberal hero. The widespread condemnation of Trump's decision to cut down US military involvement in the Middle East is also bizarre.

The international relations academic Stephen Walt comments, "This situation reminds us how stupid it was for the United States to have invaded Iraq back in 2003. Had there been no Iraq War, there would have been no US occupation, no anti-American insurgency, no 'Al Qaeda in Mesopotamia', and therefore no Islamic State. Yet the strategic geniuses (including current US National Security Advisor John Bolton) who promoted this ill-fated scheme keep recycling new versions of the same policies today."

But Walt goes too far in concluding that by pulling out of Syria, Trump "did the right thing in the wrong way". Trump's decision partly reflected his campaign promise to reduce US involvement in foreign wars. But it also involved a strategic bargain with Turkey's president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

### Support

US forces in Syria have been operating in support of the Kurdish nationalist YPG. YPG fighters provided the ground troops to drive Isis out of its Syrian strongholds.

But the YPG is politically aligned to the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), which has waged a long war to assert the national rights of Turkey's Kurdish minority.

The US policy infuriated Erdogan, who has in recent years strongly backed the efforts of the Turkish military to crush the PKK. Turkish troops have been in Syria fighting the YPG for more than two years. Now Trump has given them a free hand against the YPG, who may align with Syrian government forces. In exchange Erdogan has promised, patently insincerely, to "eradicate whatever is left of Isis in Syria".

Trump will visit Turkey this year. This is a big success for Erdogan. He has also used the murder of the Saudi opposition journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Kingdom's consulate in Istanbul to strengthen Turkey's position in the region.

In his resignation letter Mattis declared, "One core belief I have always held is that our strength as a nation is inextricably linked to the strength of our unique and comprehensive system of alliances and partnerships."

He probably prefers the alliance with the Saudi dynasty to relying on the cunning and independent Erdogan.

More fundamentally, Mattis was reaffirming the traditional strategy of US imperialism since the 1940s of enhancing its power through the web of alliances that bind all the leading capitalist states to the US.

Trump is a vocal critic of this strategy, and has targeted the Nato alliance and Germany in particular. He tweeted in response to Mattis, "Allies are very important—but not when they take advantage of US."

Mattis's departure removes one more restraint on Trump pursuing the policy of economic nationalism that is the core of whatever ideology he has.

Expect the ride to get bumpier still.



TRAFFIC WARDENS on strike in London last month

PICTURES: GUY SMALLMAN

# Traffic wardens in London determined to win more pay

by SARAH BATES

**TRAFFIC WARDENS in Camden, north London, staged a magnificent two-week strike in December to win better pay.**

Over 120 Unison union members outsourced to NSL from Camden council began a 14-day strike on 6 December.

The low-paid, predominately black workforce are fighting for an hourly rate of £11.15.

They staged large, defiant picket lines at NSL workplaces throughout the action.

Strikers marched on 12 December, handing out leaflets to passers-by and chanting, "Low pay—no way".

Striker John told Socialist Worker that it was important to picket because "we want to make our point—we're not satisfied".

### Cost

"Our wages are too low for the cost of living in London," he said. "It's gone up and up and our wages are at a standstill."

This is the third time the traffic wardens—officially known as Civil Enforcement Officers—have struck over pay in the last nine years.

Strikes worked in 2016 when bosses agreed to pay them above the London Living Wage.



Workers are making their voices heard

But since then, the London Living Wage has gone up—and NSL fat cats are refusing to cough up.

Traffic warden Sunny said although the strike meant a short-term loss in wages, it was "worth the sacrifice".

"We deserve more because of the amount we raise for Camden council," he said.

Sunny told Socialist Worker that the added wage bill would amount to just £200,000 extra a year for NSL.

He said that "NSL can afford to give us our money" because some of its directors are making £250 an hour.

"The way we've been treated is unbelievable," added another traffic warden.

Many strikers complained about unfair treatment at the hands of management—who make a hard job more difficult.

"They don't value their staff," one said. "One traffic warden was hit on the head at work and hospitalised for three months."

"When he got back to work they didn't pay his wages as they said his sick leave has been used up."

And workers are furious about the lack of respect they've been shown by

bosses, which is fuelling the desire for action.

"We do different jobs but the ones at the top are privileged," said one striker. "But if you are privileged, you shouldn't treat others like a cat or a dog."

"This is the only job we've got."

"There should be a way of giving us fair treatment if we are making millions for the company."

Traffic wardens play an important role in maintaining congestion-free streets and safety in one of London's busiest boroughs.

### Harassment

But many workers face racism and harassment on the streets—where they often work alone.

Maverick, a traffic warden for two years, said that being a lone worker means "we have to face members of the public alone and some are really aggressive".

The dispute has seen big pickets, marches and a lobby of Camden council.

This kind of action helps raise the profile of the strike and keeps the pressure on NSL and council bosses.

Workers' names have been changed. Messages of support to [unison@camden.gov.uk](mailto:unison@camden.gov.uk)



**Got a story?**

Email ideas to [reports@socialistworker.co.uk](mailto:reports@socialistworker.co.uk)

# Chance of justice blocked at Grenfell fire inquiry

**ANY CHANCE of justice for those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire is being delayed and blocked.**

The second phase of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry is likely to be paused until the end of this year.

The shocking admission was made by the inquiry's chair Sir Martin Moore-Bick at the end of the hearing in December.

He was drawing to a close the first phase of the inquiry, which was looking into the immediate causes of the fire.

The second phase will examine the wider issues surrounding the fire—though not the policies and funding cuts that made such a fire almost inevitable.

Moore-Bick made his announcement after three days of summing up by lawyers representing the main parties connected to the fire.

"Given the scale of preparations that have to be carried out, I think it is unlikely that it will be possible to start phase two hearings before the end of next year," said Moore-Bick.

"However, careful and detailed preparation which enables us to focus on the aspects of the programme that are of real significance should make it possible to ensure that proceedings, once begun, can be completed within a reasonable time."

He went on to say that his interim report for the first stage of the investigation will be produced "as soon as possible, having regard to the volume of material that has to be digested".

## Disclosed

The main reason given by the inquiry team for the delay is that some 200,000 documents related to the fire need to be disclosed.

It is almost inconceivable that the inquiry's organisers did not anticipate such a body of evidence would need to be sifted through.

The next stage of the inquiry must be easier for survivors and bereaved to attend. It should be held in west London, rather than in central London.

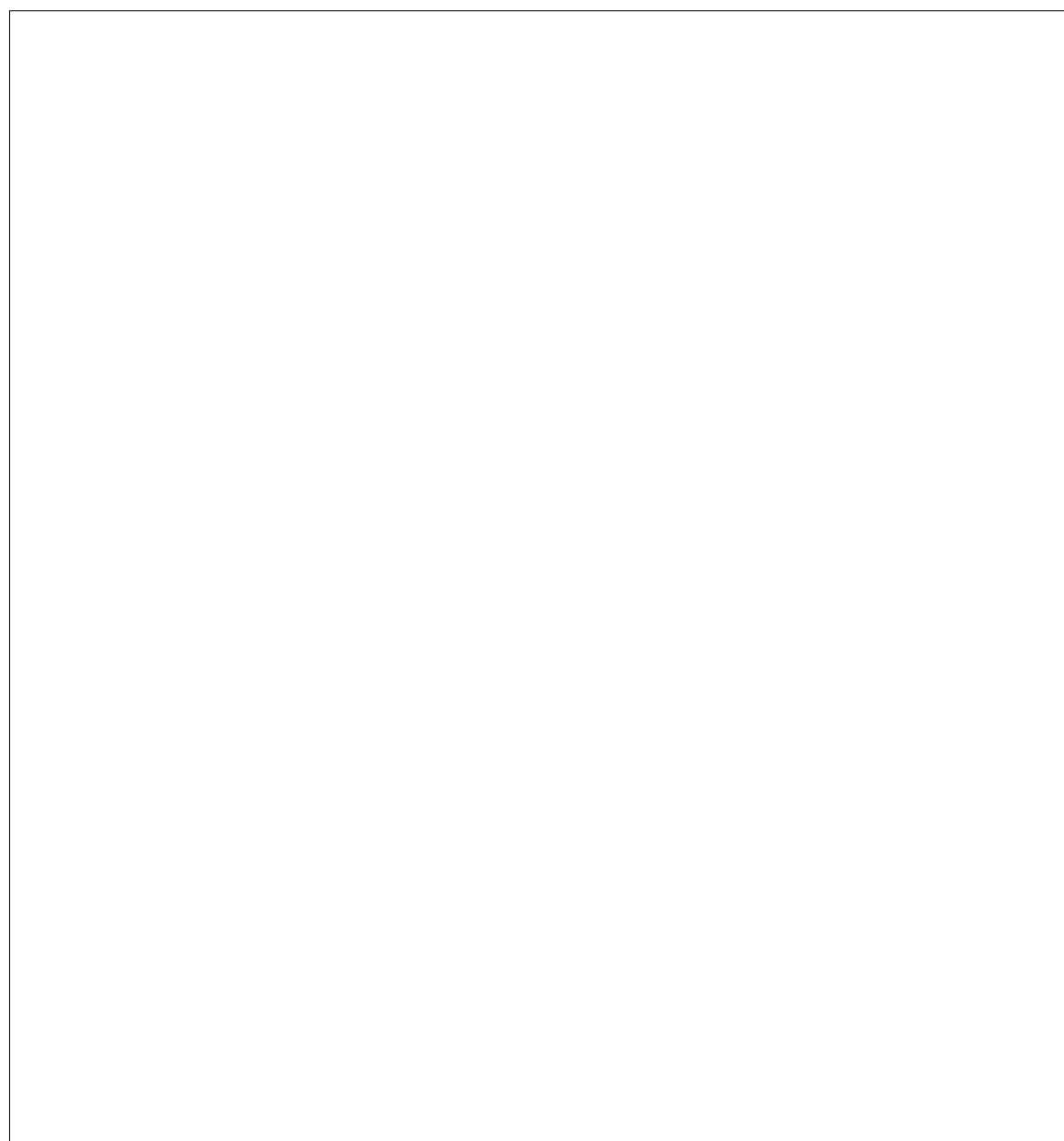
Moyra Samuels from Justice4Grenfell told Socialist Worker, "It's increasingly clear that the people who are responsible for the fire are trying to throw each other under the bus. There's a sense that some parties are not cooperating with the inquiry."

"Survivors and residents have been treated with contempt. They deserve much better."

In their closing statements the organisations and companies involved tried to pass the baton of blame to each other.

Arconic—the firm which manufactured the cladding used on Grenfell Tower—set the tone for this legal game.

It said its cladding material used



**AT LEAST 72 people died in the Grenfell Tower fire, but survivors have been denied justice**

"in combination with the other materials", alongside "other fire safety features (or lack thereof)" created the conditions for the fire.

Arconic is trying to shift blame on to the manufacturers of other products, the firm that installed the cladding and the firm that contracted that job out.

At no point has Arconic denied its cladding is flammable.

All the guilty must be held accountable, from those who installed the cladding, to the firms that manufacture flammable building materials.

But the buck stops at those at the top of government who created the environment that firms were allowed to make their profits at the expense of at least 72 people's lives.

**Alistair Farrow**



**On other pages...**

The winter of discontent showed workers' power >> Page 17

## Hillsborough trials set to begin at last

THE TRIALS of two men charged in relation to the 1989 Hillsborough football disaster are set to start on 14 January.

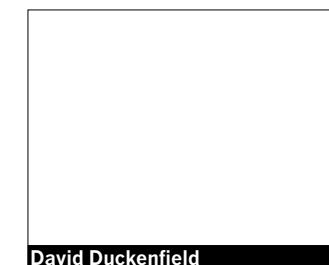
The two are David Duckenfield, who was match commander on the day, and Graham Mackrell, who was secretary of Sheffield Wednesday football club.

Some 96 Liverpool fans died as a result of the disaster, following a crush in pens 3 and 4 at the Leppings Lane end of Sheffield Wednesday's football ground.

Judge Sir Peter Openshaw in December dismissed a request from Duckenfield's lawyers to halt his prosecution.

Duckenfield faces 95 charges of gross negligence manslaughter. There can be no prosecution for the 96th victim of the disaster, Tony Bland.

According to the law in 1989, a charge of manslaughter



**David Duckenfield**

can't be applied in relation to someone who died over a year and a day after the alleged criminal acts took place.

Bland suffered critical brain injuries in the crush and was placed on life support. That was turned off in 1993.

Mackrell has been charged with an offence involving the stadium safety certificate and a health and safety offence.

Three other men have been charged with criminal offences relating to the disaster, and are due to stand trial in September.

These are former South Yorkshire police chief superintendent Donald Denton, former chief inspector Alan Foster and former South Yorkshire police force solicitor Peter Metcalf.

They are charged with undertaking acts with intent to pervert the course of justice relating to alleged amendments made to officers' statements.

All five men deny the charges.

## FIGURE IT OUT

- 96** Liverpool fans died during the crush
- 29** years. How long campaigners have fought for justice
- 5** men are due to stand trial in 2019

## Victory against the frackers

**ANTI-FRACKERS DECLARED a victory last month as Cuadrilla removed key equipment from its Preston New Road (PNR) site in Lancashire.**

**Five fracking pumps, alongside other key fracking equipment, were seen leaving the site near Blackpool on 18 December.**

**Frack Free Lancashire called on the company to "remove the rest of their equipment and leave once and for all".**

**Although the company has promised to be back in 2019, it rounds off a year of problems for Cuadrilla.**

**PNR was supposed to be the site of the first high volume frack in Britain since fracking**

**caused earthquakes in 2011.**

**But the area has been plagued by earth tremors since fracking began in October—causing operations to be halted repeatedly.**

**Despite the company boasting of an "amazing year", its share price has tumbled, and campaigners say financial difficulties may be the reason behind withdrawing equipment.**

**In other bad news for the fracking industry, Igas last month announced that it was unable to find Bowland shale during an exploratory frack.**

**But the frackers will continue to push their polluting industry. Mass resistance will be needed to stop them.**





# Attack on migrants in US forces workers to go unpaid

by ALISTAIR FARROW

**US PRESIDENT Donald Trump is so determined to push forward his racist assault on migrants that he is prepared to stop government workers' pay.**

A partial government shutdown in the US was into its second week as Socialist Worker went to press. This is when government offices close because politicians in the congress won't agree to a budget.

The shutdown happened because Trump demanded billions of dollars to build a wall along the border with Mexico.

Hundreds of thousands of workers—some 25 percent of the government workforce—have gone without pay since 22 December.

Many are struggling to pay their housing costs and other bills.

The racist US president demanded £4.48 billion for the wall.

On top of this, Trump signed an executive order last weekend freezing all civilian government workers' pay for the rest of the US financial year.

Democratic Party politicians have proposed a budget that includes no new funding for Trump's wall.

It was set to be put to the vote on Thursday of this week—when the party takes control of the House of Representatives.

But it is unlikely to pass the Republican-controlled Senate.

## Posture

Democratic leaders posture as anti-racist defenders of migrants. But this is completely hollow.

They have said they will stick to current border security funding—just over £1 billion for the financial year. That means continuing the policy that repels people fleeing poverty and violence.

Some Democrats have said they would consider extra funding for things such as “enhanced fencing, technology, drones, satellites, lighting, sensors and cell phone towers” but not a wall. Thousands of migrants' lives are at risk at the

## FIGURE IT OUT

**800,000**

Federal government workers have gone without pay due to a shutdown forced by President Donald Trump

**380,000**

Of those were told to stay off work. The rest have had to keep working unpaid

US border as they wait to have their asylum claims processed. Migrants have been murdered in the border town of Tijuana in Mexico.

Successive US administrations have made it more difficult to process asylum claims legally.

People have to cross the border illegally to force the government to process them.

And once they are taken into custody there is still no guarantee of safety. Seven year old Jakelin Cael Maquin died in December after spending 11 hours in Border Patrol custody. A five month old was also hospitalised with pneumonia after being detained.

Trump's advisers have admitted he is not wedded to the idea of a continent-spanning border wall.

White House counsellor Kellyanne Conway said, “There may be a wall in some places, there may be steel slats, there may be technological enhancements.”

But on 31 December Trump took to Twitter to declare, “Without the Wall there can be no Border Security.”

The border question is a matter of life and death for migrants and federal workers. But it's a game to the US political establishment.



## On other pages...

The regime that inspires Bolsonaro >>> Pages 14&15

CHILDREN ARE kept in freezing conditions in US border detention centres

## Revolt in Sudan threatens the regime

MASS PROTESTS in the north African country Sudan over the price of basic goods have been met with vicious repression.

But they have continued and threaten president Omar al-Bashir, who has ruled since a military coup in 1989.

At least 28 people have been killed and 240 injured during demonstrations against the government.

Amnesty International says the real death toll is 37.

Police fired tear gas and stun grenades on hundreds of protesters in several cities last Friday—the tenth day of the revolt.

These included the capital Khartoum and its twin city

Omdurman, Port Sudan, Atbara and Madani.

The protests initially broke out on 19 December.

People rallied against the government tripling the price of a loaf of bread from one Sudanese pound to three.

Over the past year, the cost of many goods has more than doubled while the Sudanese pound has plunged in value.

The region's dictators, including in Egypt and Qatar, have expressed support for Bashir, fearing the spread of revolt.

It would be a great start to 2019 to see the fall of the Sudanese regime.

Longer online at [bit.ly/SudanProtests](https://bit.ly/SudanProtests)

Demonstrators in Khartoum last month

## Protests return to Tunisia

Demonstrations have erupted in Tunisia after a journalist set himself on fire in protest at the lack of real change after the revolution of 2010-11.

Journalist Abderrazak Zorgui burned himself alive in the Tunisian city of Kasserine on Monday of last week.

In a video published online before he set himself

on fire Zorgui said, “For the sons of Kasserine who have no means of subsistence, today I start a revolution.”

Thousands protested in the city following Zorgui's funeral, spreading quickly to other areas in the following days.

Cops used tear gas in an effort to repress the protests. The new protests

follow another wave of demonstrations against poverty in early 2018. And teachers struck over low pay last month.

Now the journalists' union in Tunisia has called for a general strike on 14 January to mark the anniversary of the 2011 revolution that toppled the dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali.



## Academies are a scam

THERE WAS a big campaign in 2012 to stop our local primary school becoming an academy.

Michael Gove's selloff of the school to Lord Harris's academy chain went ahead despite the opposition.

I walk past the school every day. I see the banners go up, claiming "good" or "improving" Ofsted reports.

Now we hear that the head and two other teachers have been sacked over "tampering with SATS tests"!

Turning schools into academies is done for profits, not for better education. If schools are run for profit with no local accountability, children are thrown to the business vultures.

Harris Academy was a rip off from the start and we knew it!

Janet Evans  
North London

## Volunteers no solution

I AM a volunteer at a food bank in South Tyneside. I agree with your analysis about volunteering (Socialist Worker, 5 December).

Volunteering is good but it is not the solution.

We must get rid of the hated Universal Credit and end austerity. We need to halt plans to privatise any parts of the NHS.

Also, we should not be listening to investment bankers, celebrities or Tories for their solution.

After all, what do they know about hardship?

Rob Murray  
South Tyneside

## Fight ruling classes in and outside of the EU

IT IS good that Socialist Worker has highlighted Costas Lapavistas' new book, *The Left Case Against the EU* (Socialist Worker, 12 December).

Costas rightly shows how EU policies have destroyed the lives of millions.

He also shows how the EU is responsible for the deaths of thousands of refugees and migrants.

He clearly shows how this is the result of the very nature of the EU, and



ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

## Fighting back has helped to recover from hate crimes

DURING FEBRUARY 2018 I came out as trans-female. Since the age of five, in 1967, I knew that I was female, trapped in a male body.

Until this year, this fact has caused me considerable mental anguish.

After coming out in February, I have suffered two hate crimes. These were very distressing, but the police were not really interested.

These crimes led me to suffer from PTSD.

Once I had sufficiently overcome them I decided that, in the absence of non-existent mental health support thanks to the Tories, I had to pick myself up.

And to do that I would join causes and a political party that

would support me in doing this.

I am fortunate that I have managed to make a remarkable recovery.

Many people do not.

For me it is personal. Morally I had to act.

How dare the likes of the Nazi Tommy Robinson and his cohort be allowed to patrol the streets, attacking people and spitting out such hatred?

And it is not just in Britain. Worldwide, the rise of the far right is totally unacceptable.

They need to be stopped at all costs.

I am proud to be a member of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), specifically, Sheffield branch.

I have truly found a home from

home as within this branch and the SWP I have been welcomed with open arms.

There is such positivity within the SWP. In addition, I am part of Stand Up To Racism.

In London I was one of the 30,000 demonstrators against racism and fascism at a protest last year.

What I experienced during the march was a Britain of multiculturalism. That is what it should be like in Britain and across the world.

That is what drives me to devote my time and energy to our causes. United we are powerful. No pasaran!

Juliette de Tosni-Tauvignon  
Sheffield

## Shame on Labour over care strike

BIRMINGHAM HOME care workers started action to stop the Labour council from cutting their hours and jobs way back in January 2018.

Many are lone workers and to strike and show such unity is quite incredible, inspiring and humbling.

They won an award for the Campaign of the Year at the TUC Awards Dinner.



Care workers need support

PICTURE: GEOFF DEXTER

The care workers have continued to fight against a draconian Labour council under Ian Ward.

They have been treated shoddily, indeed disgracefully, by Ward and

his cronies. Every time the care workers come up with help to end this long-running dispute it is the council that wrecks it.

Chaz Stoll  
Dudley TUC

Just a thought...

## France fight needs support

MACRON NEEDS to go and the system needs to change.

This is perhaps the biggest demonstration against capitalism in France since '68. The Yellow Vests need encouragement.

Cameron Trost  
On Facebook

● IN THE French election last year the left parties would have won if they had been one party.

Hope they can unite to give these desperate people a voice in power.

@PaulineGTsmith  
On Twitter

## Lots of cash in the system

THE WORLD'S richest people spent £5.2 billion on properties in the year to the end of August 2018.

There's lots of money in the system.

Sharon Williams  
Glasgow

## Calais crisis is getting worse

CALAIS REFUGEES are attacked by French police and blocked by British state racism (Socialist Worker online, 9 December).

Police are beating up and harassing refugees and it is getting worse.

Hannah Biss  
On Twitter

## Coppers don't care about us

OUR VILLAGE was without a landline phone service for a 36-hour period in December.

Elderly or frail people who have "buttons" on a cord need an active phone line to work.

I asked the local police what would happen if someone died. They were not interested.

Cheryl Partridge  
Bedfordshire

## Card readers to boost sales

THE BIG Issue is trialling giving card readers to sellers in six cities.

Socialist Worker sellers should investigate using card readers.

The cost would be greatly exceeded by the large increase in sales to people who don't carry cash.

John Smithee  
Cambridgeshire



**A** HUNDRED years ago Britain was in revolt. The year 1919 saw 34 million strike days, rioting police, an armed forces' mutiny and mass resistance among the working class.

A huge wave of resistance was sweeping the globe as the 1917 Russian Revolution inspired movements for socialism across Europe.

Every state has to be able to rely on its army. But British rulers couldn't be sure of their soldiers' loyalty.

The German Revolution had finished off the First World War, but British troops were still stuck in dirty barracks.

The desperation to be demobilised—discharged from the military—led to conscripted soldiers rising up.

Although the level of organisation varied between different units, it led to thousands-strong soldiers' meetings which took their demands to military chiefs.

War secretary Winston Churchill wanted to ship conscripted soldiers to Russia to fight against the revolution.

But, having escaped a war where millions died, British soldiers weren't keen to be sent off to another warzone.

The central demand was over the speed of demobilisation, but demands grew to include complaints over food, living conditions and the behaviour of officers.

**T**ERRIFIED, Churchill insisted that all army commanders issue weekly reports on revolutionary organisation in the ranks.

Folkestone in Kent saw 2,000 soldiers refuse to embark for service abroad on 3 January.

Their action drew others behind them and 10,000 marched to the town hall, where a mass meeting was held.

The next day boats to France sailed empty, and the soldiers in Kent busied themselves by forming a soldiers' union and electing a committee.

Folkestone was just the beginning, as over the next fortnight tens of thousands of soldiers in Britain and abroad mutinied.

Around 1,500 troops based in Park Royal in north west London took their complaints straight to Prime Minister Lloyd George in Whitehall.

He was discouraged from meeting the deputation in case "similar processions would march on London from all over the country".

Soon revolt spread to the navy. Sailors on the HMS Kilbride, docked at Milford Haven in Pembrokeshire, went on strike.

When the captain went ashore to report their mutiny, they hauled down the naval flag and hoisted the red flag.

The head of the Royal Navy wrote on 5 February, "Unless we acted soon, the situation would become worse and worse each day."

"There was no doubt that we were up against a Bolshevik movement in London, Glasgow and elsewhere."

The movement soon reached British troops abroad.

In Calais, troops struck for four days over the victimisation of a soldier who had been agitating over slow demobilisation.

Police on the march

## Even the cops went on strike

**EVEN THE** police were touched by the mood of revolt. They began to form unions and agitate for better conditions.

Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Edward Henry, said the authorities would sack any cop attending union meetings.

So they did it in secret. The National Union of Police and Prison Officers organised a solid strike in August 1918 that won better pay, a widows' pension and the reinstatement of union activists.

It led Henry to complain that, "They actually got more than they asked for."

Members of the union returned a huge vote for strikes in June 1919—48,863 for

action, and 4,324 against. The government decided it was time to kill off the threat of police action. It did it with repression and bribes.

Striking police were threatened not only with the sack, but also the total loss of pension. At the same time they were given improved pay and conditions.

A strike finally took place in July, but only 1,000 came out in London. In Liverpool 1,200 cops struck—leading to three days of rioting.

The experience of 1919 saw the government work to separate the police off from workers and ensure their loyalty as an anti-working class force in the future.

Strike committees operated in all the camps of Calais and the surrounding area.

A "Calais Area Soldiers' and Sailors Association" was elected to coordinate action.

Attempts were made to crush it, but troops that were sent to smash the dissent fraternised with the striking soldiers.

The government was terrified that soldiers would unite with striking workers.

### Coordinate

A report to deputy prime minister Bonar Law explained that groups of workers were looking to coordinate action with mutinied troops.

"The danger consequent upon even the slightest success of such a scheme must be patent to anyone who has studied the course of events in Russia," it said.

"The spread of this spirit is alarming.

"Evidence can be obtained of a determined effort to emulate the Russian Bolshevik movement of this country."

Although this exaggerates the reality, this fear in the ruling class was genuine.

Troops won local victories, as well as the government rapidly speeding up demobilisation and increasing pay.

This meant Churchill could not send soldiers to Russia.

There were already 15,000 troops based in Russia by January



One hundred years ago protests and strikes shook the state. Sarah Bates tells the story of a year of struggle that posed a challenge to the system

# BRITAIN IN REVOLT 1919

1919—and they weren't immune to the revolutionary fervour sweeping Europe.

**R**USSIAN forces dropped leaflets from planes explaining why British troops should turn their fire on their commanders, not Bolsheviks.

There were strikes and the formation of a soldiers' soviet.

On 22 February, Private Riley Rudd wrote a letter saying, "All had

gone on strike—half meeting in IM hut last night and passed resolutions that they must be withdrawn from Russia immediately. Others to the effect that censorship be removed from letters in order that people in England may get to know the true state of affairs out here."

It wasn't just the armed forces who were in revolt.

In Glasgow the Scottish Trade Union Congress and the Clyde Workers' Committee—led by shop

stewards accountable to rank and

file workers—raised the demand of reducing the working week from 47 to 40 hours.

It would create jobs and improve workers' lives.

Just three days into January's strike, 40,000 workers in the engineering and shipbuilding industries had joined it.

And even more worryingly for the bosses, solidarity action started to spring up.

Miners from nearby pits were convinced by flying pickets to walk

out for a 40-hour week.

By the fourth day of action on 31 January, tens of thousands of strikers flooded into George Square, police baton charged the crowd.

Among the scrum, the police arrested leading members of the Clyde Workers' Committee who were on their way to the square.

The fighting lasted into the night.

The violence was discussed in the War Cabinet the following day, where Scottish secretary Robert Munro described it as "a Bolshevik uprising".

Troops were deployed from north-east England to police the streets of Glasgow.

And the army stationed in the city's Maryhill barracks were locked in their barracks in case they sympathised with strikers.

The English troops, along with tanks, returned six days after the strike finished on 12 February.

Even this didn't end the fightback.

**T**HE POTENTIAL existed for workers in all the key industries to fight together.

But that raised the question of leadership.

The focus turned to the Triple Alliance, a collaboration between the leaders of three trade unions to support each others' members with action.

It brought together unions representing miners, railworkers, and dockers and other transport workers.

Formed in 1914, the Triple Alliance should have coordinated powerful action between some of the most organised and biggest sections of the working class.

### Conservatism

But the conservatism of its leaders meant the potential was never fully realised.

They saw their role as bargaining with bosses, not working to overthrow the state and capitalism.

Trade union leaders such as Jimmy Thomas, of the railway workers' union and a Labour MP, worked to minimise the action.

Speaking in the House of Commons he said, "However difficult an official strike may be, a non-official strike will be worse, because there is always the grave danger in unofficial strikes of no one being able to control them."

But even with right winger Thomas in the leadership, a 100,000-strong railway worker strike stopped wage cuts.

**T**HE GOVERNMENT was determined to divert a possible general strike, so it offered an investigation into miners' pay, conditions and hours—the Sankey Commission.

Its interim report offered higher pay and a cut in hours, but not nationalisation. Trade union leaders travelled the country telling workers to accept the commission's recommendations, rather than striking for more.

At the high point of the strikes, Lloyd George told the leaders of the Triple Alliance, "If you carry out your threat and strike, you will defeat us."

But, he warned that the process could mean "a force arises in the state which is stronger than the state itself".

He asked, "Gentlemen, have you considered if you are ready?"

The union leaders ran away. Robert Smillie, president of the miners' union, later admitted, "From that moment we were beaten and we knew we were."

Workers' struggle in 1919 shows a level of coordination and scale of action that is still inspiring today.

But it also shows how a situation's revolutionary potential can slip by unless there is a group of workers organised in a revolutionary party to raise the level of struggle, generalise it and take the lead to win socialism.

Workers at Downing Street as the government called a state of emergency

Luton Town Hall was burnt down in protests

## The bosses pushed racism

THE RULING class always seeks to divide resistance, and some workers can be led to blame the wrong people for their problems.

There were racist riots in several major British ports between January and August 1919. Black workers were targeted because some white sailors

thought they were "stealing" jobs. This was compounded by bosses paying Indian seafarers a lower rate.

Some unions blamed the Indian workers for undercutting

the wages of white workers.

In May 1919, a boarding house for black sailors in Limehouse, east London, was surrounded by a furious group of racists. The Times newspaper reported that "any coloured man who appeared was greeted with abuse and had to be escorted by the police."

"It was necessary at times to bar the doors of the home."

Even at high points of struggle it's necessary to fight racism, sexism and everything that divides working class unity.



After the police cleared the protests on Bloody Friday in Glasgow



## WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

### INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

### REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

### THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

### INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries.

We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

### THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests. We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to [www.swp.org.uk](http://www.swp.org.uk) or phone 020 7840 5602 for more information

SOCIALIST WORKER PUBLIC MEETINGS

# Socialists, anti-racism and resistance in 2019



What can we do in 2019 to stop the Nazis?

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

#### ABERDEEN

Mon 7 Jan, 6pm,  
The Snug,  
Ma Cameron's,  
6-8 Little Belmont St,  
AB10 1JG

#### BARNSELY

Thu 10 Jan, 7pm,  
Room 302 - The Civic,  
Hanson St, S70 2HZ

#### BIRMINGHAM

Wed 9 Jan, 7pm,  
Birmingham LGBT Centre,  
38/40 Holloway Circus,  
B1 1EQ

#### BRADFORD

Thu 10 Jan, 7pm,  
Glyde House,  
Little Horton Lane (opposite  
the ice rink), BD5 0BQ

#### BRIGHTON & HOVE

Thu 10 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Ship St, BN1 1AF

#### BRISTOL

Wed 9 Jan, 7.30pm,  
YHA,  
14 Narrow Quay,  
BS1 4QA

#### BURNLEY AND PENDLE

Wed 9 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Red Triangle Cafe,  
160 St James's St,  
BB11 1NR

#### CARDIFF

Wed 9 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Cathays Community Centre,  
Cathays Terrace,  
CF24 4HX

#### CHESTERFIELD

Thu 10 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Chesterfield Library,  
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#### DERBY

Thu 10 Jan, 7pm,  
West End Community Centre,  
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Britannia Mill), DE22 3BL

#### DUNDEE

Wed 9 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Dundee Voluntary Action,  
10 Constitution Rd,  
DD1 1LL

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EH1 2JL

#### EXETER

Wed 16 Jan, 7pm,  
The Exeter peace shop,  
31 New Bridge St,  
EX4 3AH

#### HARLOW

Thu 10 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
1 Church Leys, CM18 6BX

#### KENT

Thu 10 Jan, 7.30pm,  
Nucleus Arts Centre  
(Conference Room),  
272 High St,  
Chatham, ME4 4BP

#### LANCASTER AND MORECAMBE

Thu 10 Jan, 7pm,  
Friends Meeting House,  
Meeting House Lane,  
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Education Centre,  
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Friends Meeting House,  
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Thu 10 Jan, 7.30pm,  
The Round Chapel,  
2 Powerscroft Rd (corner  
Lower Clapton Rd),  
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#### LONDON: HARINGEY

Wed 9 Jan, 7.30pm,  
St John Vianney Church Hall,  
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N15 3QH

#### LONDON: NEWHAM

Wed 9 Jan, 7pm,  
Stratford Advice Arcade,  
107-109 The Grove (next  
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E15 1HP

#### LONDON: SOUTH

Wed 9 Jan, 7pm,  
Vida Walsh Centre,  
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Wed 9 Jan, 7pm,  
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Community Centre,  
6-8 Greenleaf Rd,  
Walthamstow, E17 6QQ

#### LONDON: WEST & NORTHWEST

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Woodlane Community Centre,  
78 White City Cl,  
Shepherd's Bush, W12 7DZ

#### MANCHESTER: CENTRAL

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Friends Meeting House,  
6 Mount St,  
M2 5NS

#### NEWCASTLE

Thu 10 Jan, 7pm,  
Commercial Union House,  
39 Pilgrim St,  
NE1 6QE

#### OXFORD

Wed 9 Jan, 7.30pm,  
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Manzil Way,  
OX4 1YH

#### PLYMOUTH

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# Honest and all-too-possible story of abusive relationship

An Impossible Love is a challenging and believable portrayal of a woman's life torn apart in slow motion by an abusive partner, writes **Sadie Robinson**

**GO AND see An Impossible Love but be prepared to be upset. Repeatedly. This is often a hard film to watch.**

The advertising says it's about a mother and daughter trying to preserve their relationship and love for one another in the face of a "manipulative" father.

This is true but it doesn't tell you the half of it.

The film, based on a novel by Christine Angot, isn't about gratuitous violence.

Instead, the horror it conjures up is more creepy and insidious.

It starts by introducing Rachel, who is said to be getting a bit old to be unmarried—at the grand age of 25!

But then again this is a provincial French town, Chateauroux, in 1958.

Rachel, a typist with quite a boring life, is very quickly swept off her feet when she meets Phillipe, the rich son of Parisian doctors.

He seems charming and attractive when we first meet him, taking Rachel on dates, complimenting her and talking about ideas.

## Unreliable

It seems that he has brought some colour into her world.

But he ends up being an unreliable and disruptive person in her life, eventually causing her decades of pain.

There are warning signs from the start about Phillipe's behaviour.

But I wasn't prepared for just how horrendous that behaviour would become, and I don't think many viewers will be either.

This is the strength of the film. Narrated by Rachel and Phillipe's daughter Chantal, it's brilliant at getting across how abuse works, and



PHILLIPE SEEMS charming—but his appearance hides his abusive behaviour

how it is hidden. There are hints at what is going on, but at the same time the truth is obscured.

The effect is that the viewer can be nearly as much in the dark as one of the main characters is.

And then feel stupid for not seeing it all along.

The film shows how it can be that even those closest to a victim

can be completely oblivious to their suffering.

It shows why people often don't speak up or seem to want to be with their abuser.

It is also very down to earth with how it portrays the fallout of living in a dysfunctional family.

Things are messy and people can make progress in their lives only to

fall back again. They don't always act in rational ways or make logical choices.

This is a hard film but it's not altogether bleak. It shows people surviving, pulling together and recovering from terrible experiences.

It shows that life goes on.

An Impossible Love is on limited release from 4 January

## A tale of defiance with a touch too much nationalism

### FILM

#### THE 12TH MAN

Directed by Harald Zwart  
On limited release from  
4 January

THE 12TH Man is a tale of violence and pain against a picturesque backdrop.

This is the true story of Jan Baalsrud, a Norwegian soldier who infiltrates Nazi-occupied Norway on a mission with 11 others.

Baalsrud is the only one among them to escape after being discovered. But

now he has to somehow make his way to Sweden—trying to evade the Nazis and survive the Arctic conditions with gangrene in his foot.

Baalsrud's incredible ordeal seems as endless as the expansive, bleak and gorgeous snow covered vistas that he strives to escape from.

It's a story of endurance and survival—and a not so subtle metaphor. Baalsrud endures and survives, just as Norway endured and survived the occupation.



Thomas Gullestad as Jan Baalsrud in The 12th Man

So naturally it's a patriotic film, heavy on the nationalism. That's to be expected from any Second World War film, but doubly so one that tells the story of a national hero.

While the Nazis struggle to cope in the wilderness, Baalsrud's determination to survive sees him through. Several Norwegians hide and shelter him as well.

Despite the threat of execution no one turns him away or threatens to hand him over to the

Nazis. All of them do it for the "fatherland" Norway and because—as news of his escape spreads—he gives them hope.

You can ask what sort of hope people might find in such nationalism today. And if this was a British film you can be sure we'd question its patriotic message.

But for all that this is still a story of how ordinary people defied the Nazis—and a beautifully filmed one at that.

**Nick Clark**

### THEATRE

#### TELL TALE HEART

Written by Anthony Neilson  
At the National Theatre until  
9 January

THIS ADAPTATION of Edgar Allan Poe's classic gothic horror short story is inventive, funny and well acted.

It takes the story as a starting point and whizzes off in lots of different directions.

Beginning with an over-earnest point about the role of failure in art, it moves to farce and then to horror.

The quick changes of tone and pace could be a problem for some actors. Not so for Tamara Lawrance.

She holds together the play with huge skill and smoothes some of the kinks in the script.

The audience is made aware that the playwright, Anthony Neilson, is clever. His version of Tell Tale Heart is a play within a play about a playwright writing a play in a dream. Keep up.

There are great jokes in here, and some at the expense of the playwright. The jumps and shocks are well done—aided by a great set and dramatic special effects.

Tell Tale Heart is an enjoyable evening at the theatre. The fragmented script is held together by a cast and background team working in great harmony.  
**Alistair Farrow**

### BOOK

#### SMACK-BAM, OR THE ART OF GOVERNING MEN—POLITICAL FAIRY TALES OF EDOUARD LABOULAYE

Edited by Jack Zipes

THIS NEW collection on little-read French fairy tales is fascinating.

In one story the king and captain of the guards are killed and the hero refuses the good queen's offer to live in the castle. Instead, he returns to his mother and then disappears.

The rejection of the aristocracy is the "happy end" of the tale.

Edouard Laboulaye was a poet and liberal politician who thought of the idea of giving the US the Statue of Liberty.

He thoroughly believed in progress within the existing system. Laboulaye thought that through moral education and human compassion politicians could bring about good government.

These stories contain more anti-establishment views than his politics suggest.

**Simon Basketter**



**B**RAZIL'S new president Jair Bolsonaro likes to associate himself with the military dictatorship that ruled the country between 1964 and 1985. By doing this, he is consciously invoking dark memories of death squads and torture.

In the early 1960s Brazil was in crisis.

The government, led by Joao Goulart, was embattled from all sides.

Goulart criticised both the US and the “socialist” regime in Cuba, and pleased neither, which left Brazil isolated internationally.

The Brazilian working class was emboldened by the lifting of previous restrictions on organising and asserted itself through a series of strikes targeting key sectors of the economy.

Goulart's government was gradually worn down by a multitude of crises and hostile forces arrayed against it.

During this period of instability the armed forces launched a coup. US president John F Kennedy had developed secret plans to “prevent Brazil from becoming another China or Cuba”, despite there being little danger of any such thing.

On the day of the coup, 31 October 1964, the military could not agree on a course of action. This was a taste of the infighting to come.

General Olimpio Mourao Filho marched on Rio de Janeiro while others thought it was too early.

Brazilian academic Alfredo Saad-Filho described the forces behind the coup as “an emerging alliance between internal manufacturing capital, foreign capital, traditional landed interests and the urban middle class.”

Similar, though not identical, forces are arrayed behind Bolsonaro today.

Back then, different groups had their own sets of interests and fought over the direction the regime would move in. For instance, would it look to the US for support or try to go it alone?

These two wings within the military vied for control.

Splits among them would mean the dictatorship was wracked by infighting from the beginning.

Rigged elections ensured the president changed every five years, which meant even more jockeying for position at these times.

Immediately after the coup came a crackdown. Politicians, trade unionists and others opposed to it were stripped of their political rights. Strikes were banned.

Despite the attack on rights, the regime did not go so far as wholesale torture and assassination in the early stages. But that would change.

The regime aimed to smash workers' rights. Between 1964 and 1967 real wages fell by



A MILITARY dictatorship in Brazil between 1964 and 1985 saw death squads and torture

# BRAZIL'S DARKEST DAYS

As Jair Bolsonaro was inaugurated president this week, he looked back fondly on the decades-long dictatorship that brutalised Brazil from 1964. Alistair Farrow analyses the regime and looks at how it was eventually defeated



Joao Goulart

about 25 percent. By 1967 it had removed job security for all workers.

In 1968 the regime faced an upsurge in working class militancy in response to falling wages. Initially the generals did not know how to deal with the strikes.

A large strike on the outskirts of the city of Belo Horizonte saw 15,000 metalworkers from 19 different firms walk out to demand the return of job security and a wage increase of



Elements of the left began a guerrilla fight but failed gain much support

25 percent. After negotiations the military accepted some of the strikers' demands.

The generals learned their lesson quickly, though. The next big strike, three months later in an industrial district outside Sao Paulo, saw 3,000 workers occupy their factories.

Troops went in and the strike was brutally crushed.

For the next ten years the workers' movement was suffocated and bosses could really go on the offensive. The

regime ploughed money into the energy sector, infrastructure projects—partly aided by the influx of labour from the countryside to the cities—and the consumer goods industry. Economic growth followed.

But this “Brazilian economic miracle” was in part based on an oil price boom.

The main beneficiaries were the urban middle classes, new layers of which were created through salary increases and subsidies for the better off.

As it shored up its social base, the regime cracked down on dissent. In December 1968 president Artur da Costa e Silva shut down parliament and signed Institutional Act No 5, suspending the right to not be detained without trial.

This also removed human rights and granted the president the authority to remove any elected official from office.

The state still maintained two formal political organisations, although “parties” were banned, and staged elections continued to be held.

This turn unleashed forces in Brazilian society in 1968 that haunt it today.

**A**S WITH police the world over, Brazil's cops have used violence and torture all through their history. But during the dictatorship they stepped it up. So did the secret services of the different wings of the armed forces.

In response to being forced underground, elements of the left began a guerrilla campaign. This failed to gain widespread support and was left isolated, fighting for survival in the face of a brutal campaign by the military.

As part of the fight against the guerrillas, paramilitary death squads were set up. They also targeted working class areas on the outskirts of the cities and killed with impunity.

Today, President Bolsonaro's favourite slogan is, “The only good thug is a dead thug.” It is a direct reference to this period, borrowed from Jose Guilherme Godinho Ferreira, known as Sivuca, himself a member of one of the most infamous death squads—Scuderie Detetive Le Cocq.

This was set up by a mixture of military figures, journalists and other “professionals” after the assassination of Detetive Le Cocq, a colleague of Sivuca's.

In 2012 a report from the newspaper Estadao estimated that such death squads killed some 900 in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro alone between 1963 and 1975.

That's compared to 434 deaths attributed to the military dictatorship nationally by the 2014 Truth Commission.

There was an easy relationship between these death squads and the editors of corrupt newspapers—which were allowed to continue

publishing despite censorship. Between them they tried their best to popularise extra-judicial killings as a means of solving Brazil's problems.

When Bolsonaro talks about “a cleansing never before seen in the history of Brazil” he is giving the green light to these same forces to begin the killing again—forces that did not vanish with the dictatorship.

The legacy of the Brazilian state's savage escalation of violence during the dictatorship is one of the key reasons for the high levels of violence in Brazilian society today.

In 2017 60,000 people were killed, and more than 5,000 of these by the police.

But even under the strictest regimes there is resistance. A series of political crises combined with an upsurge in struggle from below to challenge the dictatorship. Sections of the ruling class also began to demand the liberalisation of the economy. The regime was under pressure from all sides.

In 1974 a political party of the regime, Arena, suffered a bruising electoral defeat. It lost in 16 of the 22 Senate seats up for election, signalling the beginning of the end of the dictatorship. The factions within it argued for different ways out, but there were none.

**B**Y 1978 social movements were mounting increasingly direct challenges, partly coordinated with elements within the Catholic Church, which had pledged to resist the regime.

The Cost of Living Movement was mobilising thousands in state capitals across the country. Meanwhile, workers were fighting back with increasing ferocity. Throughout 1978 strikes grew on a massive scale.

At the heart of the strikes was an industrial working class that had rapidly expanded and was increasingly concentrated in the industrial areas surrounding Sao Paulo.

Huge swathes of people had been sacked by agricultural bosses who wanted to restructure their businesses and grow low-labour, intensive crops.

Workers were pushed towards the cities and became the heart of the resistance.

The strikes started with 2,500 workers walking out at Sao Bernardo do Campo on 12 May. They reached a high point when



General Olimpio Mourao Filho with the army top brass following the 1964 coup (top) Tanks of Sao Paulo were designed to intimidate resistance (above)

half a million workers walked out at 400 factories in 18 towns in the state of Sao Paulo.

In 1979 metalworkers in and around Sao Paulo joined the fight and won their demand for pay increases. At the head of the metalworkers union at the time was Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, who would become known as Lula—a future leader of the Workers' Party, and later the country's president.

Every injustice acted as an ignition spark. On 30 October 1979 a military officer assassinated Santo Dias Silva on a picket line in Sao Paulo. His funeral turned into a mass protest march through the city.

Strikes continued throughout 1979 and into the 1980s, making the regime's position increasingly untenable. By 1985 it could hold on no longer.

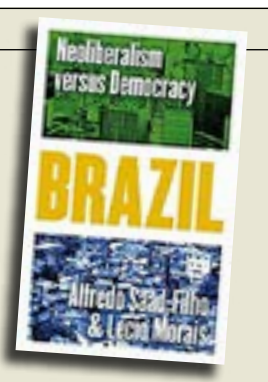
Workers and the poor got rid of the regime. Now they will have to mobilise again to get rid of a new government with the military at its core.

## READ MORE

● **Brazil: Neoliberalism versus Democracy** by Alfredo Saad-Filho and Lecio Morais £18.99

● **Brazil: how big a defeat?** by Valério Arcary In the new edition of International Socialism journal [isj.org.uk](http://isj.org.uk)

● Available at Bookmarks, the socialist bookshop. Phone 020 7637 1848 or go to [bookmarksbookshop.co.uk](http://bookmarksbookshop.co.uk)



## Divisions in the military put Bolsonaro under pressure

Bolsanoro's new government is full of contradictions and is unstable—that means that resistance has the potential to defeat it

THE FAR right Jair Bolsonaro has been sworn in as president of Brazil.

His government promises to attack workers, women, LGBT+ people and the environment. It will fight for the interests of the rich, and give greater powers to the repressive state forces.

Academic Alfredo Saad-Filho spoke to Socialist Worker about the contradictions at the heart of Bolsonaro's government, and the potential for resistance.

“Bolsonaro's alliance is unstable and potentially unsustainable,” said Alfredo.

“The coalition behind him during the election campaign was largely made up of evangelical Christians. “They are not a homogenous block, though they do share many interests.

“He was not the candidate of the military or the middle classes at the start. But now he's in power more groups are putting demands on him in return for their support.”

Chief among these is Brazil's powerful military, and rival factions within it.

“In the military there are two wings—the conservative nationalists and the pro-US neoliberals,” said Alfredo.

### Paralyse

“For a long time many people on the left argued that these two wings would paralyse each other and would not be able to act as a unified political actor. That was wrong.”

Now Bolsonaro has to balance these interests. Each will pressure him to move in a different direction.

Bolsonaro's government is fragile, but real resistance is needed to get rid of him.

Members of the Workers' Party (PT) and British Labour Party MPs addressed a Brazil Solidarity meeting in the House of Commons in November 2018. The



PICTURE: FABIO MONTABROS/FILHO

PROTESTING AGAINST Bolsonaro in Sao Paulo last year

### BACK STORY

**Far right Jair Bolsonaro is Brazil's new president**

● He took around 55 percent of the vote in an election last October

● The election campaign was marked by violence and attacks on candidates

● Bolsonaro has backed the use of violence by cops

● He used his campaign to target minority groups and whip up hatred and division

● There have already been many protests against him

PT's London branch told the meeting, “The governments of Lula and Dilma Rousseff introduced laws that allowed the independence of the police from the government, and the independence of the public prosecutors.”

### Indigenous

She said Rousseff had warned that “black people are going to suffer, that indigenous people are going to suffer, and that this is just going to get worse under Bolsonaro”.

The argument has to be about how to resist. It was heartening to see the protests during Bolsonaro's inauguration and the continuing agitation among students. That must be built on.

“At the heart of any resistance to Bolsonaro must be the workers,” said Alfredo.

“Unfortunately they are fragmented because of the pull of the PT. “This continues to have a huge demobilising effect. “The majority of the trade unions are not left wing—only a handful are, and they are small.

“Bolsonaro's government will move very quickly against the Landless Peasants Movement and the Urban Homeless Movement, as well as other movements associated with the left.

“If these key groups of the left are crushed then the rest will be a matter of mopping up. “The government is not strong. It is fragmented and unstable. It is possible that resistance can defeat it.”



At the heart of any resistance to Bolsonaro must be the workers



# Fire authorities plan bonfire of services

by NICK CLARK

**A FIRE station in Scotland was so short-staffed in December that it was forced to close.**

Marionville fire station in Restalrig, near Edinburgh, had to close for a day because just two firefighters were off sick.

The remaining three on duty weren't even enough to crew one fire engine.

It meant Restalrig and nearby Craighentilly were left without emergency cover.

It's an indictment on where nearly a decade of cuts has left the fire service. Short staffing in fire stations has become a major problem.

## Stations

Figures compiled by the FBU union showed that other fire stations in Edinburgh were often left with just enough firefighters to crew one of their two engines.

But FBU East of Scotland secretary John McKenzie said the situation at Marionville fire station was "unprecedented".

"How can emergency fire

## BACK STORY

**Fire services across Britain have suffered deep cuts under the Tories**

● Since 2010 nearly 12,000 firefighter jobs have been cut across Britain

● Some 421 firefighter jobs were lost between March 2017 and March 2018 alone

● This has left firefighters unable to respond to some emergencies or even forced to close their stations

● But local fire authorities now want to slash even more funding

● They are currently conducting consultations on the planned cuts

provision be provided when fire engines are left unstaffed and stations left closed?" he asked.

Nearly 12,000 frontline firefighter jobs have been cut across Britain since 2010.

But the government—and the local authorities that implement the cuts—keep on



**FIRE ENGINES and firefighter jobs have suffered large scale cuts**

slashing. In Tyne and Wear, the fire authority is consulting on plans to reduce the number of fire engines at some stations.

And it wants to downgrade other stations to "on call"—meaning they're only open some of the time.

Another authority in

Hertfordshire is consulting on plans that could mean the loss of 50 posts.

Proposed plans would mean the number of firefighters crewing an engine would be reduced from five to four.

Hertfordshire FBU chair Derek McLeod told Socialist Worker that this would

"affect the safety of our members and ultimately the safety of the public".

All this comes on top of austerity measures that have beleaguered the fire service for at least ten years.

"We've lost three fire stations since 2006 and we've had firefighter posts lost," said

Derek. "By loss of funding, staff shortages and a recruitment freeze we're riding with very low crew sizes."

That legacy of cuts has left fire services stretched across the country.

## Rescue

FBU South East regional secretary Joseph Weir said, "Since 2010 West Sussex Fire and Rescue has already saved £8 million and reduced the number of firefighters by 37 percent."

"But you are getting to this perfect storm now where there is nothing else they can lose."

"The cuts can be the difference between life and death."

Across Britain, already-stretched fire brigades could be facing another round of cuts.

When this results in situations such as that in Restalrig, the blame lies at the feet of the Tory austerity the authorities that implement it.

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# The winter of discontent showed workers' power

Forty years ago a Labour Party government was close to declaring a state of emergency due to militant strikes. **Sadie Robinson** looks at lessons for today

**FORTY YEARS** ago this month, mass strikes had a Labour government that was implementing austerity on the run. Yet prime minister James Callaghan was in denial.

Under the headline, "Crisis? What crisis?" in the Sun newspaper, Callaghan said, "I don't think other people would share the view [that] there is mounting chaos."

But the winter of discontent caused so much chaos that Labour considered using troops to break strikes.

Labour was elected in 1974 promising to bring about "a fundamental and irreversible shift in the balance of power and wealth in favour of working people and their families".

Instead it imposed the worst attacks on workers since the 1930s. By 1978 some 25 percent of people in Britain lived below the official poverty line.

A policy to limit pay meant wages went down in real terms while prices shot up. Labour imposed a 5 percent cap on pay rises while inflation stood at 16.5 percent. Meanwhile it cut taxes on big businesses.

## Rise

A nine-week strike by Ford workers won a 16 percent pay rise in November 1978. In the winter of 1978 tanker drivers, council workers, water workers, journalists, bakers and others struck against the pay limit.

Union leaders had tried and failed to hold back the struggle (see below).

Labour considered declaring a state of emergency as fears grew about a strike by 8,500 tanker drivers set to start in January.

A secret plan codenamed Operation Drumstick was drawn up. This would put 9,000 soldiers on standby to drive

4,000 requisitioned petrol tankers to break the strike. In the end bosses gave drivers 15 percent pay rises just hours into the strike.

One government report complained that pickets had "isolated a new consignment of beans" headed for a closed Heinz factory in Wigan. Strikers were "refusing to allow the beans out".

On 22 January 1979 one and a half million public sector workers struck over pay. Tens of thousands protested in London, and some 3,000 went on to meet in Westminster Central Hall.

Socialist Worker reported at the time, "Union officials were visibly shaken by the aggressive demands for all out strike action and nothing less."

Ambulance worker Tony Ventham said, "I've never seen so much hostility to the union leaders. There was frequent slow hand clapping, boos and catcalls."

"The officials are sitting on dynamite. A militancy has been unleashed that can really blow up in their faces as well as those of the government."

The TUC agreed a deal with the government in February to end the strikes.

The brutal attacks demoralised working class people and created a space for Margaret Thatcher to be elected prime minister in 1979's general election.

And the winter of discontent showed how, for all their rhetoric, Labour and the union leaders will try to limit workers' resistance. But it also showed the power that workers have when they fight.

**On other pages...**  
Britain in revolt 1919  
>>Pages 10&11

## Bosses on the offensive

**LABOUR BENT** over backwards to help the bosses—but they just demanded more.

In 1975 and 1976 they engineered a collapse in the value of the pound by moving money abroad.

Director general of the bosses' CBI Campbell Adamson said, "We certainly discussed an investment strike."

"We also discussed various things about not paying various taxes, and a list of things which in themselves would not have been legal."

And the CBI president urged



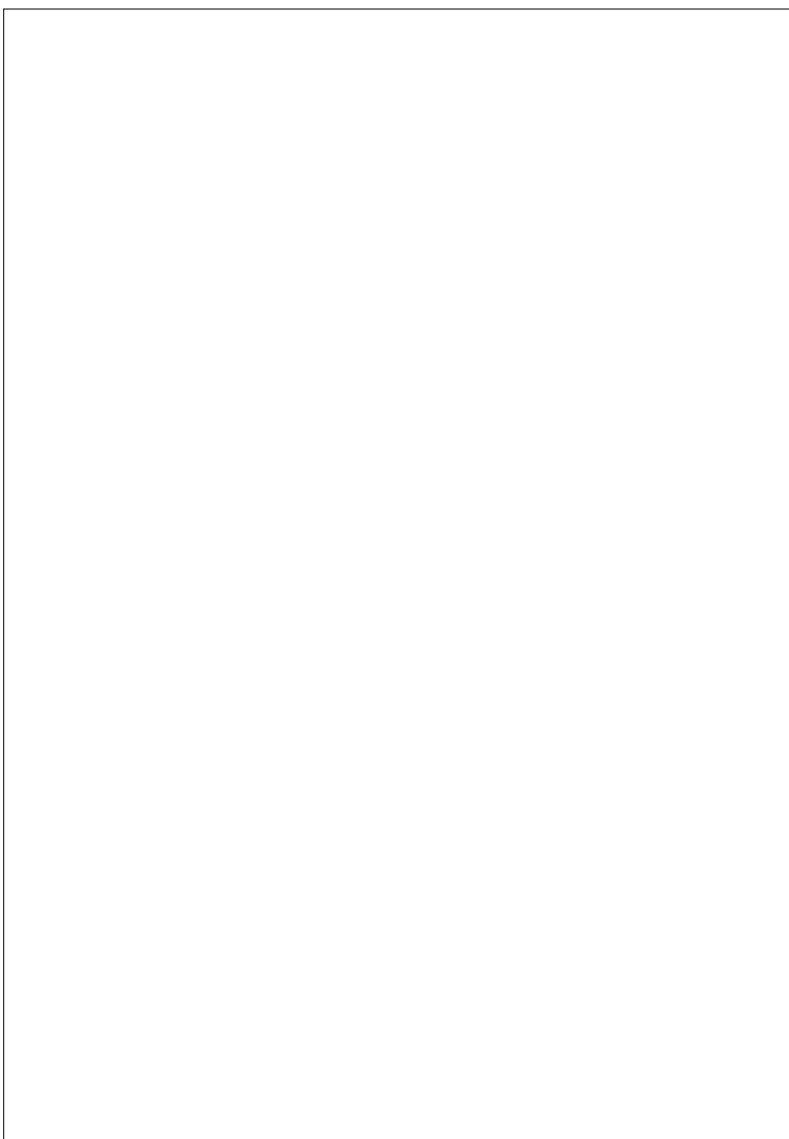
Callaghan to use troops against strikers. "You should declare a state of emergency if conditions do not improve immediately," he wrote.

"What we are witnessing is the outcome of the imbalance of power that has been

progressively tipped to the total advantage of organised labour."

Bosses wrecked the economy to the extent that in September 1976

Labour went to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a loan. The IMF demanded deep cuts in return.



MORE THAN a million public sector workers struck in January

## Labour and TUC collusion

IN 1974 the TUC had signed an agreement with Labour, the Social Contract, promising to limit wage claims. Union leaderships spent their time trying to protect Labour.

Jack Jones of the TGWU union said in 1975, "We simply must keep this Labour government in office and stand by it."

When the Seamen's Union threatened pay strikes in 1976, TUC general secretary Len Murray told them, "By god, we'll make sure no union supports you."

Firefighters staged their first ever national strike in 1977. The TUC voted not to support them. It later instructed workers to cross strikers' picket lines. The

government was terrified that union leaders could lose control over workers.

One Department of Transport report about a lorry drivers' strike complained, "Control by TGWU hierarchy doubtful and weakening."

Labour also tried to undermine action. Callaghan warned TUC leader Len Murray, "Maybe the trade unions will have to learn their lesson and face the anti-union measures that a Thatcher government would bring in."

New codes of conduct were drawn up to try and control picketing. These laid the basis for future Tory attacks.



**LABOUR'S** attacks on working class people saw it begin to lose local elections.

In April 1977 it lost Ashfield to the Tories—a mining constituency where Labour had had a 23,000 majority.

Labour stayed in office by doing a deal with the Liberals, and with Welsh and Scottish nationalist parties.

It also did a deal with the Ulster Unionists to cling onto office.



**LABOUR** scrapped some 25,000 hospital beds in the first two years of the 1974-79 government.

And some 1,000 jobs a day went in its first three years.

By 1976 unemployment had reached 1.6 million – compared to 500,000 in 1974.

Prices doubled between February 1974 and December 1978.

The cost of a basic loaf of bread soared by a quarter in 1978 alone.



**SOME 29,474,000** working days were "lost" to strikes in 1979, compared to 9,306,000 in 1978.

Labour used troops against striking tanker drivers in Northern Ireland.

Soldiers occupied the Sydenham depot in east Belfast and took over 60 petrol stations.

It also considered using scabs and troops against 80 gravediggers who struck in Liverpool and Tameside, Greater Manchester, in January 1979.



## IN BRIEF

**Rail strikes to defend safety**

STRIKES ON South Western Railway and Northern rail in December completed a year of resistance against driver only operation (DOO) trains.

RMT union members have held walkouts during many weekends.

Strikers are fighting for a guarantee that future DOO services will have a second safety-trained member of staff on board.

More action will be needed as train bosses and the Tories are keen to roll out DOO across Britain.

**Ferry workers demand rights**

RMT UNION members rallied at Portsmouth International Port on 22 December.

Workers were protesting against Condor Ferries, which operates between Portsmouth and the Channel Islands.

It doesn't pay the minimum wage or recognise unions.

**Bakerloo Tube line walkout called off**

A STRIKE planned for Boxing Day over low staffing on the Bakerloo Tube line was called off after progress in talks.

The RMT union members are still set to walk out on Monday 14 January.

A strike was also suspended on the Central Line.

**Strike over bullying at Rail Gourmet**

RAIL GOURMET staff in Edinburgh employed on the LNER line struck on Christmas Eve, their third day of strikes.

The RMT union said the dispute was centred on claims of bullying and harassment of workers.

**Students say no to Soas library cuts**

BIG CROWDS joined an "emergency rally" to stop savage cuts at the Soas University of London library on 11 December.

Management has proposed cutting nearly 25 percent of staff at the library as part of a restructure.

**Win over pay at Wetherspoon pubs**

WETHERSPOON workers in Brighton have won pay rises after staging a strike last year.

Bfawu union members at two Wetherspoon pubs in Brighton joined workers from the fast food industry to strike for better pay last October.

The pub chain announced pay rises for all of its workers in Britain last November.

Now workers at two of its pubs in Brighton have won an extra 60p an hour rise on top of that.

## ANTI-RACISM



OVER 1,000 people joined an angry protest outside the Home Office in London on Tuesday 11 December. It was called by the End Deportations campaign after the "Stansted 15" were convicted under terror laws for stopping a deportation flight

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

## MEDIA WORKERS

# Cumbrian journalists walk out over low pay

JOURNALISTS working at regional newspapers in Cumbria struck for two days last month in a fight against cuts and for better pay.

The NUJ union members work for newspapers owned by publisher Newsquest in Carlisle, Workington and Whitehaven.

The newspaper giant has made more than 100 people redundant since it took over from previous publisher CN Group last March.

Journalists are angry that Newsquest bosses have failed to offer them a pay rise.

There was a good turnout on picket lines in Carlisle and Workington. Strikers held placards calling on Newsquest to stop the cuts to local news.

Newsquest's cuts repeat a pattern at other newspapers it owns across Britain, where papers are often reduced to running on skeleton staffs.

NUJ members struck at a Newsquest-owned newspaper in Swindon last year. And



On the picket line in Carlisle

Newsquest newspapers in south London have also seen strikes.

One striker said, "When I got into journalism I knew this wasn't a highly paid job, but I expected to be able to have a reasonable standard of living."

They added, "I was taken on to work for a weekly, yet I now

provide content for two weekly papers, a daily one, websites and anything else they can squeeze out of me."

"I have never had a pay rise to compensate for the extra work."

"Knowing that I'm being used is leaving me crushed at the end of each day."

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

# Bin workers refuse to take bosses' rubbish treatment

BIRMINGHAM BIN workers began a round of industrial action last Saturday.

The Unite union members' overtime ban means workers will not perform work normally allocated to another grade and will return to base for food.

They are angry about management's treatment of workers following Birmingham's high-profile bin strike in summer 2017.

Unite says "secret payments" have been made to GMB members, who didn't take part in the action.

■ HOME CARE workers in Birmingham finished off a year of strikes with a dramatic confrontation at a cabinet meeting of the Labour-run council last month.

The Unison union members hoped to confront council bosses but were barred from entering the building.

Workers staged 46 walkouts last year over devastating cuts to the home care service. The low-paid women workforce voted by 96.8 percent in December to continue with strikes.

## SCOTLAND

# Reject the pay offer

THE UNISON union is recommending that 80,000 Scottish local government workers accept a pay deal.

Bosses have offered a 3.5 percent rise this year followed by a 3 percent rise next year and in 2020. The GMB and Unite unions are yet to announce their position on the offer.

Council workers should reject the offer and join the Scottish teachers in demanding a 10 percent rise.

## POST

# Threat of walkout delivers win for victimised worker

POSTAL WORKERS in Bristol have won justice for a sacked colleague by threatening strikes over Christmas.

Royal Mail managers were forced to return delivery worker Barry Barker to his normal duties at Bristol South East delivery office.

Bosses sacked him last October for an alleged "breach of business standards". They then reinstated Barry but moved him to another office.

The CWU union said managers never explained what this "business standard" was.

Bosses said he had "acted inappropriately" in a meeting where he was not allowed representation—another allegation the union denied.

CWU members at the office felt Barry had been treated unfairly and voted by 86 percent to strike unless he was allowed to return.

Bosses caved in shortly afterwards.

CWU branch secretary Rob Wotherspoon said the victory was down to the "rock solid support and solidarity" shown by Barry's co-workers in the office.

Nick Clark

## ISLE OF MAN

SOME 200 postal workers on the Isle of Man struck for two days last month. Their CWU union said the action was "rock solid".

The workers are fighting against attacks on their pensions and pay planned

by bosses at the Isle of Man Post Office. Bosses called for new talks on the first day of the strike.

But the action continued and CWU leaders said bosses did not address the dispute's fundamental issues.

## HOSPITALITY

# Workers at Royal Palaces fight over pension cuts

WORKERS AT three Historic Royal Palaces—the Tower of London, Kensington Palace and Hampton Court Palace—struck for three hours last month.

The PCS union called off two further three-hour strikes for talks.

Workers at the three sites are fighting attacks on their pensions.

Bosses at Historic Royal Palaces, which manages the sites, want to close the current pension scheme and replace it with a worse one.

The strikers walked out on 21 December. They also



On the picket line

planned to strike on 28 December and Wednesday of this week, but the action was suspended when new talks began.

## TRANSPORT

# Durham bus workers plan seven-day strike over pay

BUS DRIVERS in the north east of England plan a week-long strike over pay from this Sunday.

The Unite union members at Arriva Durham voted by 72 percent to reject bosses' latest pay offer.

The action from 6 January will affect buses in Durham,

Darlington, Stockton and Whitby.

Unite regional officer Bob Bolam said, "Our members can't endure the glaring pay inequality with other companies. The revised offer failed to bridge that pay gap."

"The ball is now very much in the management's court."

## AIRPORT WORKERS

CLEANERS AT London Luton Airport struck over Christmas in their fight for higher pay.

Unite union members outsourced to Sasse staged a seven-day walkout from 21 December. Workers are

demanding £9 an hour.

But bosses have only offered a three-day pay deal that would see cleaners earn below the Living Wage of £8.25 by 2021. The action followed a seven-day strike from 11 December.



## EDUCATION

# Academy fight not over at John Roan

by SADIE ROBINSON

**THE UST chain withdrew as a sponsor for the new academy at The Joan Roan school in Greenwich last month.**

Parents and workers who have fought the academy plan at the south east London school said they were “relieved and extremely pleased”.

But the fight isn't over. The school's governing body has been replaced with an imposed Interim Executive Board (IEB).

## Forward

The government has imposed IEBs elsewhere to push through academy plans.

But academy plans have also been defeated—and workers at John Roan can win.

GMB union members at the school struck for three days last month. And NEU union members refused to cross their picket lines.

They fear that academisation will harm children's education and put their conditions and jobs under threat.

Cleaner Margaret told Socialist Worker, “We shouldn't be putting business first. They will mess you



SCHOOL WORKERS in the GMB union have won solidarity from teachers

PICTURE: GUY SMALLMAN

around—one day the business might be successful, but the next day it can fall.”

And cleaning supervisor Tammy said, “We want to keep our jobs and conditions, but we also care about the school.”

The NEU suspended their

official strikes after Labour-run Greenwich council threatened a legal challenge, but it plans to reballot.

Tim Woodcock, divisional secretary of Greenwich NEU, told Socialist Worker, “Teachers are bravely refusing to cross the picket line.

We have a high level of unity and we are all fighting about the same thing.”

●Messages of solidarity to [Steve.oakes@royalgreenwich.gov.uk](mailto:Steve.oakes@royalgreenwich.gov.uk) and [Greenwichnut@outlook.com](mailto:Greenwichnut@outlook.com) Donate to support the strikers [bit.ly/JohnRoanStrikeSupport](http://bit.ly/JohnRoanStrikeSupport)

## STEVENAGE

## School workers walk out over academy scam plan

NEU UNION members at The Barclay School in Stevenage, Hertfordshire, struck on Wednesday 12 December.

They are fighting a plan for the school to become part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) this month.

The school faces being taken over by London-based MAT Future Academies Trust, chaired by Tory and former schools minister Lord Nash.

The Department for Education (DfE) ordered it to become an academy after it was rated inadequate by Ofsted in 2016.

Parents are also campaigning against the academy plan. A group of

parents delivered a petition signed by over 1,500 people to the DfE on 10 December.

Parent Jane said she hoped that education secretary Damian Hinds would “confirm that the wish of our community is listened to, and the academy order on Barclay School be revoked”.

Herts County Council councillor Joshua Bennett Lovell joined parents.

He called the academy order “an unnecessary distraction”.

And he called a protest outside the school in support of NEU members on the day of the strike.

●[bit.ly/HandsOffBarclay](http://bit.ly/HandsOffBarclay)

## PAY CAMPAIGNS

## Teachers could strike over pay in England and Wales

AN INDICATIVE ballot over pay in the NEU education union is set to end early this month.

The School Teachers' Review Body had recommended a 3.5 percent pay rise for all teachers.

Yet the government refused to implement this.

Instead it has said that only teachers on the main pay scale, around 40 percent of teachers, will get 3.5 percent.

The rest will get 2 percent and school leadership will get 1.5 percent.

The government has also refused to fully fund the rises.

This means schools that are already suffering cuts will be expected to fund part of the

rises themselves. The ballot asks whether members would support industrial action to win better funding for schools and to secure the recommended pay award.

At a rally in central London last November, joint general secretary of the NEU Kevin Courtney called for the “biggest yes vote in the ballot”.

He thanked politicians, including Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who have pledged their support for teachers.

He added, “But it's our actions that make the difference. It's time for us to fight back.”

## VICTIMISATION

## Supporters demand suspended health worker Karen Reissmann is reinstated

**THE REINSTATE** Karen Reissmann campaign is gearing up for a public meeting in Manchester on Saturday, 19 January.

Karen, a health worker in Bolton, is a leading socialist and working class militant in the North West of England.

Karen was suspended from the Unison union's national executive and health service group executive committees.

She was a leading critic of the NHS pay deal that was mislaid by the leaderships of 13 health unions.

A statement initiated by Unison members now has over 500 signatories in Karen's defence.

It said, “We are opposed to disciplinary action being



Karen Reissmann

threatened or instigated against individuals or branches for simply expressing a different view from the national leadership.

“Unison needs healthy debate, not the silencing of opposing views.

“If Karen is suspended

for having views different to that of the national leadership, her suspension should be immediately lifted.”

If the Unison leadership is allowed to get away with silencing Karen, it will move against other left wingers and rank and file initiatives.

Activists should gather signatures for the statement in union branches and workplaces to demand Karen's reinstatement and democracy in Unison.

●Sat 19 Jan, 2pm The Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess St Manchester M1 6DD.

Sign the statement at [bit.ly/ReinstateKarenReissmann](http://bit.ly/ReinstateKarenReissmann) and go to Facebook page [Reinstate Karen Reissmann](https://www.facebook.com/ReinstateKarenReissmann)

## UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

## Ten more colleges could join walkouts over low pay

**WORKERS ACROSS** 26 colleges in England last month voted by 89 percent for strikes over pay. The overall turnout was 48 percent.

It was the second time that the UCU union members had voted in favour of action.

But in the first ballot that ended last October, the branches didn't reach the 50 percent turnout threshold required for legal strikes.

This time ten of the 26 met the threshold. The union has said the ten could join six colleges that struck over pay in November in a new wave of strikes.

That's good—but unions should also defy the Tory laws that block strikes.

●The ten colleges that met the 50 percent threshold are Abingdon and Witney, Bridgwater and Taunton, City of

Wolverhampton, Coventry, East Sussex, Harlow, Hugh Baird, Kendal, Leicester and West Thames. The six colleges that struck in November are Bath, Bradford, Croydon, Lambeth, New College Swindon and Petroc in Devon

■THE UCU union suspended planned strikes at four colleges in Wales after bosses made a revised offer.

It gives all teaching grades up to and including grade 6 a 3.5 percent pay rise. Workers on higher pay rates receive a 2 percent rise, while management gets 1.5 percent.

■FURTHER EDUCATION lecturers in the EIS union in Scotland are set to strike on 16 January. They are fighting a paltry pay offer of 2.5 percent over three years.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

## Jobs fight in Edinburgh

UCU UNION members at Queen Margaret University in Edinburgh are balloting for strikes to save jobs.

Planned cuts put over 40 jobs at risk—around a tenth of its staff. The UCU said that alternatives, including management savings, have not been “sufficiently explored”.

The university plays a key role in training NHS staff across Scotland.

UCU Scotland official Mary Senior said, “By threatening these cuts and refusing to rule out compulsory redundancies the university has left us with no choice other than to ballot.”

The ballot ends on Wednesday 16 January.

# Yellow Vests rock the state in France

An inspiring social movement in France has sunk deep local roots, writes **Charlie Kimber**

**THE HOLIDAY** season didn't end the Yellow Vest revolt in France—and it is set to erupt at a higher level in 2019.

What began as a protest over the price of fuel has become a social movement that has forced president Emmanuel Macron's government to retreat.

Major protests took place for the sixth Saturday in a row on 22 December and the seventh on 29 December.

Both were smaller than previous mobilisations. But even official figures showed tens of thousands of people joining demonstrations and up to 200 traffic blockades.

On 22 December Yellow Vests had said on social media they would gather at the Palace of Versailles outside Paris. Thousands of police and other forces gathered there to repulse them.

But at the last minute Yellow Vests changed their assembly point to Sacre Coeur Cathedral in Montmartre. They then found their way

## BACK STORY

**Protesters in France are calling for President Macron to resign**

- The Yellow Vests protests began in November over the rising price of fuel

- Since then the movement has generalised

- Fascists have tried to claim the Yellow Vests movement as their own

- But most of those protesting are ordinary people, not fascists

into the centre of Paris, to the intense frustration and anger of the authorities.

Helene, a laboratory worker, told Socialist Worker from Paris, "We led the police a dance. We are not going to just line up where they want us to so they can hurt us."

"Our strength is our numbers but also because we are absolutely against going back to the situation a few months

ago where ordinary people were treated like dirt. We have won a bit of respect, we want more—and Macron must go."

There were big mobilisations in many other cities. There were also blockades on the borders with Spain, Italy, Belgium and Germany.

In one or two areas the smaller size of the mobilisations enabled the voice of the fascist right to be heard more loudly. Any such appearance has to be fought.

## Typical

But it is far from typical. A major survey of protesters in Le Monde newspaper found only two of the 166 people interviewed mentioned immigration as an issue that was important to them.

A poll released by France 2 TV found 33 percent of Yellow Vest protesters said they were neither left nor right. Some 15 percent described themselves as extreme left and 5.4 percent said far right.

The movement has sunk deep local roots.

Media from across the country reported Yellow Vests maintaining their roadblocks over Christmas and describing their happiness at being with their "second family" of protesters.

John Mullen is a member of the anti-capitalist network Ensemble. He said that in the days before Christmas, "At some roadblocks the movement collected for food banks, at others they set up mock guillotines."

"One of Macron's MPs turned up for work to find her offices had been repainted in bright yellow."

"New initiatives are to be noted every day. When Yellow Vests blockaded the tax office at Figeac, some of the workers came out on strike in support of them."

This sort of resistance terrifies Macron.

## Solidarity with activists facing attack and arrests

**POLICE TEAR** gas and "flashball" attacks have injured over 2,000 people during the Yellow Vests protests.

Dozens have lost an eye or suffered fractures. Ten people have been killed by the cops or on road protests.

But state repression has not broken the Yellow Vests.

An important demand is that the hundreds arrested and facing long jail sentences are released and charges dropped.

The government is trying to target those it

thinks are the movement's leaders.

**Eric Drouet, a high-profile Yellow Vest, was seized in Paris on 22 December.**

He was charged with "illicit organisation of a demonstration on the public road, carrying of prohibited weapon of category D, and participation in a group formed for the purpose of violence or degradations".

Drouet was held in a police station but was released after furious protests.

He was set to face trial later this year.

**PROTESTING AT the Arc de Triomphe in Paris last month**

## 'We are all calling for Macron to go'

A MOVEMENT that has lasted for months has to find a democratic way to organise and define its aims.

In a very positive sign there have been general meetings (assemblies) of protesters and those who support them in several areas.

Marcel from Clermont-Ferrand told Socialist Worker, "We had our first assembly in mid-December."

"There were several hundred people there and we were united in calling for Macron to go and for ordinary people to have their voices heard."

"One person attacked migrants, but they were shouted at."

Macron first suspended then abolished the



Emmanuel Macron

fuel tax increase that sparked the protests.

He made various promises on the minimum wage and pleaded with private sector bosses to hand out Christmas bonuses.

He then tried to draw back from some of his concessions,

prompting further fury.

He even pledged a bonus for the cops, tried to wriggle out of it, and then had to pay it anyway.

This led to demands for the same cash for teachers, health workers and workers everywhere.

Some of Macron's supporters have called for a march in his support on 27 January.

It is a highly risky move that could lead to his humiliation.

The movement's success will depend on it growing, drawing in more people, maintaining its militancy, and seeking to develop links with strikes.

The Yellow Vests have inspired people across the world. They can win more.